



## **GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

### **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**August 24, 2005**

**1:45 p.m. Greensboro, NC**

**Blue Room**

**(County Commissioner's Briefing Room)**

**Old Guilford County Courthouse**

#### **TAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair
Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair
Doug Galyon	Chair, NC Board of Transportation
Robbie Perkins	Greensboro City Council
Don Vaughan	Greensboro City Council

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Wayne C. Davis	NCDOT Triad Unit-TPB
Jeff Sovich	GDOT / MPO	Richard Atkins	Triad Transportation Partnerships
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Allen Purser	Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
Peggy Holland	GDOT / MPO	Brent McKinney	PART
Jim McGregor	GDOT / MPO	Tom Brown	Town of Oak Ridge
Mike Cowan	NCDOT Div. 7	Bill Bruce	Town of Summerfield

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 1:49 p.m.

#### **Action Items**

##### **1. Approve Minutes of July 27, 2005**

Robbie Perkins moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Don Vaughan seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2005 meeting as presented.

## **2. Amend 04-10 MTIP**

Jeff Sovich advised that the proposed MTIP amendment modifies PART's project TD-4723A, Intermodal Transportation Facility, by shifting the project from fiscal year 2005 to fiscal year 2006, in order to coordinate with the FTA's Grant approval process schedule. This project covers the environmental work, land appraisal and acquisition, and facility design. The recommended action is to approve the amendment as presented.

Don Vaughan moved for the approval of this amendment as presented. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the amendment as presented.

## **3. Proposed Thoroughfare Plan Amendment**

Tyler Meyer advised that the proposed Thoroughfare Plan amendment would re-align the proposed corridor of the US 158 Bypass around the Town of Stokesdale. The existing corridor for this bypass is infeasible due to several environmental constraints. In early 2004, the Town requested that the MPO or the NCDOT conduct a study to determine a more suitable alignment for the proposed bypass. NCDOT has arranged to conduct an Environmental Assessment for the bypass project. Because the Environmental Assessment process could take three to five years to complete, the Thoroughfare Plan amendment was developed as an interim step, providing the Town with corridor it could protect through development regulation. The proposed alignment, which is intended to avoid the constraints impacting the existing bypass alignment, was developed by MPO staff with input from Guilford County planning staff. Several public meetings were held regarding the proposed amendment, and numerous public comments were received, predominantly in opposition to the re-aligned bypass corridor. The core concern of Stokesdale residents and officials is that a final alignment needs to be selected and preserved. The recommended action is not to make this amendment at this time due to a range of factors including public concerns over specific impacts, town officials' response to the proposal, and the Environmental Assessment, which is currently under way. NCDOT will determine the actual new alignment through Environmental Assessment.

Don Vaughan moved to approve the recommendation to not adopt the proposed Thoroughfare Plan amendment. Robbie Perkins second the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendation to not adopt the proposed Thoroughfare Plan amendment.

## **4. Conformity Determination Report for 06-12 MTIP/Final MTIP**

Jeff Sovich advised that in June, the TAC adopted the 2006 - 2012 MTIP, contingent upon approval of the Conformity Determination Report. A public comment period on the conformity report was held from June 22 through July 24. No comments were received. Following the public comment period, the conformity report was reviewed and approved by the federal agencies. The requested action is to approve the final Conformity Determination Report as presented. Following MPO approval, the Conformity Determination Report and the 06-12 MTIP will be submitted for approval by the North Carolina Board of Transportation.

Don Vaughan moved for the approval of the final Conformity Determination Report as presented. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the final Conformity Determination Report as presented.

## **5. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns**

None.

## **6. Citizen Comments**

None.

## **Business / Potential Action Items**

### **1. 07-13 MTIP Development Process**

Tyler Meyer advised that the development of the 07-13 MTIP proceeds, even as the final approval on the 06-12 MTIP is pending. MPO staff have worked with the TCC to develop a draft priority needs list as well as an assessment of upcoming planning study needs. Staff will revise these items based on discussion during today's MPO meetings and present the final documents for approval and submittal to NCDOT in September. The priority needs list has been prepared in recognition of the state's current fiscal situation and limited ability to fund new projects. As usual, the foremost priority is to maintain the funding and schedules of projects as programmed in the 06-12 MTIP. Priority roadway projects include the US 70 / US 29 section of the eastern urban loop, the Horse Pen Creek Road widening from New Garden Road to Battleground Avenue, the widening of US 70 from Mount Hope Church Road into Alamance County, the Norwalk Street Extension Phase II, the US-29 at Eckerson Road Interchange Reconstruction and Widening, the Pegg Road to Thatcher Road Connector, the Summit Avenue widening from Brightwood Road to Eckerson Road, the Cone Boulevard Extension and Interchange, and the Fleming Road to Lewiston Road Connector and Interchange. The bicycle and pedestrian priorities consist of Phase II of the Battleground Rail Trail, which is contingent on the rail line abandonment by Norfolk Southern. Regional study needs include funding for the environmental documents for the first tier of the Airport Area Transportation Study recommendations. The upcoming planning study needs document summarizes additional priorities.

Robbie Perkins emphasized the importance of the Pegg Road to Thatcher Road Connector and the need for involvement by Tyco, RF Microdevices, and Volvo. These three companies are major employers whose ability to remain at their current locations will depend heavily on the timely completion of this project. TAC requested that the Pegg Road to Thatcher Road Connector project be moved from the deferred projects category into the priority projects category.

### **2. NCDOT Strategic Highway Corridors Initiative**

David Wasserman was unable to attend the meeting, but will be on the agenda for a subsequent meeting.

### **3. Airport Area Planning Update**

Tyler Meyer advised that PART has recently been working on the "Heart of the Triad" concept in association with the planning directors of the major jurisdictions and will be conducting a study starting in September that will examine the development potential in the area, develop a land use plan, and recommend adjustments to the Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem-Forsyth transportation plans accordingly. As an interim step, the Greensboro MPO recently conducted an evaluation of the proposal by the High Point MPO to amend the thoroughfare plans by adding a west side thoroughfare that would connect to I-40 and the I-73 / I-74 Connector. The High Point MPO has had a long-standing project to

create a west side thoroughfare from I-85 to Main Street. An environmental study of that concept was begun, but was subsequently put on hold. The idea was later modified to connect with US 311 and further north, instead of Main Street. MPO staff evaluated High Point's plan to construct the proposed west side thoroughfare as a freeway. Three different scenarios were analyzed. The first scenario included the West Side Thoroughfare as well as all of the proposed airport area thoroughfares. In this scenario, most of the traffic continued to travel north of I-40, since it is a more direct route. The second scenario involved dropping off the I-40 / Business 40 Connector. Scenario 2 resulted in more traffic shifting to the West Side Thoroughfare. The third scenario included a modified version of the West Side Thoroughfare that ended at I-40 to tie into the I-40 / Business 40 Connector. The Town of Kernersville originated this concept, which has been proven feasible, and the most cost effective of the three scenarios. No thoroughfare plan amendments are required at this time. The High Point and Winston-Salem-Forsyth MPOs may need to make some minor adjustments to their Thoroughfare Plans in the next few months to include this concept. MPO staff will continue to coordinate with the High Point and Winston-Salem-Forsyth MPOs, and with PART on transportation planning issues for this area, and will bring forward additional information at future meetings.

Brent McKinney advised that PART recently issued a request for proposals for its Heart of the Triad study, with a submission deadline of September 12. A contract will be taken to the PART Board in October. The notice to proceed would be issued upon the Board's approval. The contract would be for a \$400,000 study, to be conducted in about six months' time. Half of the funding would come from an appropriation by the North Carolina General Assembly, while the local match would be requested from the four area chambers of commerce. A draft report would be brought to the MPOs for their consideration by mid-March, 2006.

#### **4. Signal System Replacement – Revised CMAQ Application**

Jeff Sovich advised that the initial cost estimate of \$15.4 million for the Greensboro Signal System Replacement Project has been increased to a \$23.8 million. The cost increase is due to the fact that when the initial study was conducted, it was not known that the communications media would need to be replaced. The existing copper communication lines will be replaced by fibre optic cables to allow more flexibility and reliability. Previously, \$8.8 million in CMAQ funds was allocated to this project. With the recent approval of SAFETEA-LU, \$10 million has been earmarked for the project, which will be accompanied by a \$2.5 million local match. The \$21.3 million from these sources leaves a \$2.5 million gap between the available funding and the total project cost. MPO staff are working to identify options to close this gap. There will be more details pertaining to this item at the next meeting. Design of the project will begin in early 2006. Construction will take approximately 2 to 3 years due to the abundance of cable to be replaced. The fiber optic cable will greatly enhance the technology capabilities of the transit, Wi-Fi system, and video telecommunications.

#### **5. MPO Strategic Reports**

Tyler Meyer advised that MPO staff continue to investigate issues related to the area's PM2.5 non-attainment designation and will provide further information in the next few months. Sandy Carmany added that although there have been numerous code orange warnings for ozone, there has not been an actual exceedence of the ozone standard this summer.

## **Other Items**

### **1. Board Member Report**

Doug Galyon advised that transportation infrastructure funding is at a crucial point. SAFETEA-LU will virtually empty the federal highway trust fund. In the future public/private partnerships will be needed to build roads. By contrast, the State of Florida is operating on a substantial funding surplus due to its extensive system of toll roads.

### **2. Regional Transportation News**

Sandy Carmany reported that the Environmental Protection Agency has approved the ozone emission reduction strategies submitted by the Triad Early Action Compact. As a result, the Triad is one step closer to being declared in attainment under the 8-hour ozone standard. In the Federal Register notice that discussed the EPA's review of the strategies submitted by the all the Early Action Compact regions, only the Triad's strategies were specifically mentioned.

Brent McKinney advised that the regional travel demand model is projected to be complete in the middle of October. Completion of the travel demand model will enable PART's consultant to complete work on the regional commuter transit MIS by early 2006. PART can then apply to FTA to enter preliminary engineering the spring of 2006. The basic plan involves constructing numerous park and ride lots outside the urban core to bring riders into the urban area via express bus. The PART Express service is still growing, with a ridership of about 25 percent increase over last year, and an average of 950-1000 riders per day.

### **3. Wrap-Up**

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:45 pm. The TAC adjourned at 3:10 pm.